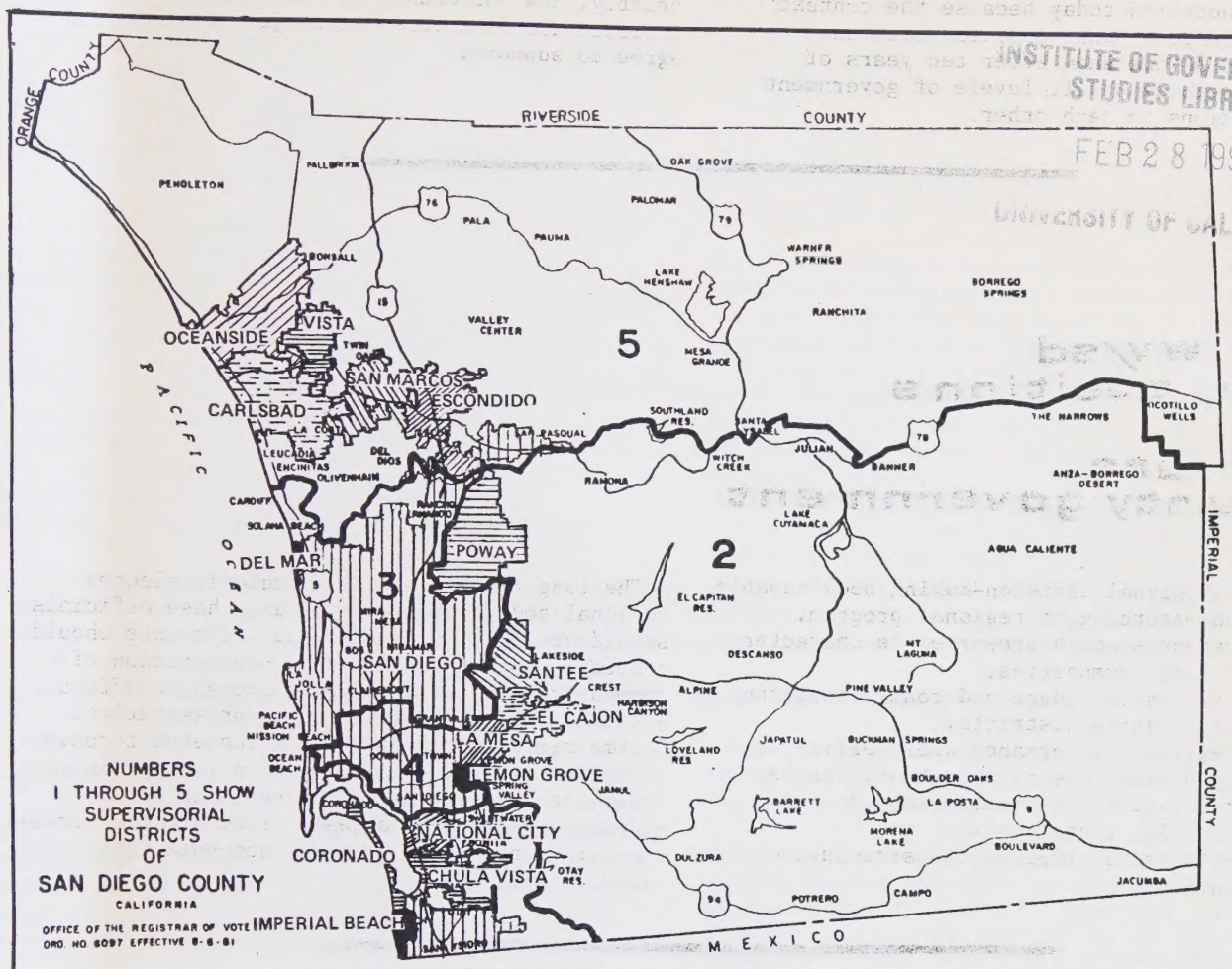


# The Structure of County/Regional Government in San Diego: A 1985 Update



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## **p r e f a c e**

The League of Women Voters of San Diego County, at its 1984 convention, adopted a two-year study to update the positions taken in 1974 on the structure of county/regional government in San Diego. Significant words in the 1974 positions have a different connotation today because the context within which the positions were discussed and adopted may not be the same after ten years of change and experience on all levels of government and their relations to each other.

The purpose of this publication is to provide background material to assist League members in deciding whether to change the 1974 positions, and, if so, how. It is not meant to be a guide to San Diego County government. The intent is to outline, briefly, how our County is now organized and to pose possible alternatives that League members might agree to support.

## **1974 lwv/sd county positions on structure of county government**

- Support of a regional decision-making body capable of planning and enforcing of regional program.
- Support of measures which preserve the character and values of local communities.
- Support of efforts to reduce and consolidate the number of special taxing districts.
- Support of regional performance where efficiency in the delivery of services is important, can be clearly measured, and could be improved by increasing the scale of operations.
- Support of efforts to simplify the structure of regional government.
- The long range goal is a popularly elected regional body with power to tax, whose officials should be elected by district. Districts should be carefully drawn to ensure the preservation of community integrity and small enough to afford accountability of the elected representative.
- Some regional representation achieved through election at large could provide a regionwide viewpoint and should not be precluded.
- Support of other changes in form which increase accessibility, visibility and accountability of public officials.

### **NOTES**

"REGION" and "COUNTY" - for most purposes San Diego County and the region are coterminous. "County" in this publication will mean all that is governed by the San Diego County Board of Supervisors. "Region" will mean all of the county, or any part, where services are provided in two or more jurisdictions by separate independent agencies.

EDUCATION - the education system in San Diego County is omitted from this study because education was not part of the League 1972/74 study.

BUDGET figures are for FY 86; that is, the Fiscal Year from July 1, 1985 to June 30, 1986.

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Study Committee: Jane Fitch, President, ex-officio; Olive Wehbring, Chair; Eddie Cisco; Anne Omsted, Helen Polatchek, Marjorie Quinn, Kay Rix, Margaret Schlesinger, Jane Skotnicki, Jonnie Stahl, Rebecca Walker, Roger Winchester.



## SAN DIEGO, THE GEOGRAPHIC REGION

The San Diego region is defined on the west by the Pacific Ocean, on the south by the border with Mexico, on the east by Imperial County, and on the northern urban coastal area by Camp Pendleton, the U. S. Marine base which - as San Diegans see it - protects their region from the sprawl of Los Angeles.

In geography San Diego County is large - roughly the size of the state of Connecticut - and varied. From the beaches, cliffs, and wetlands of the coast the land rises eastward through mesas, canyons, hills and water courses to mountains 6,000 feet high, and finally drops to the Anza-Borrego Desert.

Of the 4,255 square miles within county boundaries more than half belongs to and is administered by agencies not responsible solely to the voters of the County. Indian reservations account for 189 square miles. Federal and State governments own 2,048 square miles in the unincorporated area and 69 square miles within cities. There are 1,538 square miles of unincorporated County land and 563 square miles within the 16 incorporated cities of Carlsbad, Chula Vista, Coronado, Del Mar, El Cajon, Imperial Beach, La Mesa, Lemon Grove, National City, Oceanside, Poway, San Diego, San Marcos, and Vista.

## COUNTY GOVERNMENT IN CALIFORNIA

Counties are two types of government at once. They are agents of state government with the same state functions delegated to each of them to administer. At the same time, counties are local governmental entities with considerable autonomy.

The California Constitution provides for general law counties, charter counties, and city-county consolidations. They are all governed according to the California Government Code.

If a county votes to adopt a charter it gains the legal right to select its own form of government. Twelve of California's 58 counties have done so since it was made possible in 1911.

The State Constitution requires even charter counties to elect five supervisors, but they may decide whether they want more than five and whether the supervisors are to be elected by district, at large, or at large from districts. In June 1978 California voters passed Prop. 6 requiring every county to elect its sheriff. Charter counties may decide whether to elect or appoint all other department heads.

A charter and, later, its amendments are adopted when passed by the voters of the county. They become effective when filed with the Secretary of State.

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# county government in san diego

## HISTORY

San Diego is one of California's original counties, established with a much larger area by the Legislature in February 1850, before the State entered the Union. A Charter was adopted in 1933 and was continually amended thereafter.

In Feb. 1977 the Board of Supervisors appointed a citizens' committee to make a comprehensive review of the Charter. (The committee divided its work into two phases.) In Phase I it proposed a "Plain Talk" Charter that shortened the Charter but changed nothing in the structure of government. The "Plain Talk" Charter was approved by the voters in June 1978. In Phase II the committee recommended many substantive changes, most of them rejected by the voters in Nov. 1978.

In June 1984 the Supervisors appointed a new Charter Review Panel to look at the roles of the Supervisors and the Chief Administrative Officer, among other issues. The Panel's proposals, as Prop. A, were passed in Nov. 1984. The Panel will be proposing additional amendments for the 1986 general election.

## THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

The County of San Diego is governed by a Board of Supervisors through powers and jurisdiction granted

to it by the State Constitution and by the voters of the County in the Charter.

Every four years, in each of five supervisorial districts, the voters nominate and elect a resident of their area to represent them on the Board. District boundaries, redrawn by the Board after each decennial census, are based on several factors, but primarily on equality of population. Each supervisor now represents about 400,000 people. Districts 1, 2 and 3 elect supervisors during presidential election years, and Districts 4 and 5 during gubernatorial election years. Elections are non-partisan. A candidate who receives a majority of the votes in the primary is elected. Otherwise the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes in the primary run against each other in the general election in November. Terms begin in January.

A supervisor may be recalled using the provisions of California general law. Vacancies in office are filled either by appointment by the remaining Board members or by a special election. The salaries of supervisors are established by Board ordinance. At the first Board meeting each January the Board elects a chairman and vice-chairman, called Presiding Officer and Presiding Officer Pro Tem in the Charter. Three supervisors constitute a quorum and acts of the Board require the concurrence of three members.



## POWERS

The Board exercises both executive and legislative powers, and as an appeal body has semi-judicial powers as well. It enacts ordinances and resolutions which apply either to the County as a whole or specifically to the general government of the unincorporated area. The Board adopts an annual budget presented by the Chief Administrative Officer. The Board may authorize bond issues subject to approval of the voters. It can establish and administer special districts to provide services in the unincorporated areas. The Board appoints numerous boards, commissions and special committees.

The executive responsibilities of the Board are carried out by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) who is appointed by the Board. The only control the Board has over the courts and certain departments headed by elected officials is through the budget.

## OTHER POWERS

In addition to the CAO, the Board appoints the County Counsel, the Director of the Equal Opportunity Management Office, and the Probation Officer, the last subject to confirmation by a majority of the judges of the Superior Court. All other appointive officers are named by the CAO.

The Board adopts an administrative code, establishes the powers and duties of all officers, the rules of all departments, and it sets the number and compensation of all officers and employees in the annual budget. The Board also approves or rejects the rules for the Civil Service and for administration of employer-employee relations, and establishes a neutral appellate authority for dealing with unfair labor practices.

Prop. A (Nov. 1984) states that Board members and their staffs may not interfere with any officer or employee appointed by the CAO, but shall deal with them only through the CAO.

ELECTED DEPARTMENT HEADS

California law requires general law counties to elect a large number of officers, although all counties are permitted to combine some offices; for instance, those of Treasurer and Tax Collector, as San Diego did by Charter amendment in 1979.

A charter county must elect the supervisors and the sheriff, but may appoint or elect all other officers. San Diego's Charter still calls for the election of Assessor, County Clerk, District Attorney, Recorder, Sheriff, and Tax Collector/Treasurer.

## ASSESSOR

The Assessor has the State Constitutional responsibility of preparing an annual assessment roll for all secured and unsecured property in the County. This assessment roll is used as the basis for property taxes not only for the County of San Diego but for 282 special taxing districts within the County.

The Assessor not only serves the County of San Diego but also the other taxing agencies who depend on these revenues to fund their activities. Under Proposition 13, the Assessor maintains the authority over the reappraisal of all property on an annual basis, and all real property upon a change in ownership and new construction.

## COUNTY CLERK

The County Clerk, by virtue of the State Constitution, is the ex-officio Clerk of the Superior Court; 98% of the principal duties of the office are in this capacity. The office maintains all records, files and exhibits of the Superior Court, which includes Juvenile Court. Staff attends all sessions of the Superior and Juvenile Courts, stores and disposes of court exhibits, processes appeals to and from the Superior Court, and is responsible for a variety of official records.

The department also registers corporate and fictitious names, qualifies Notaries Public and Process Servers and issues marriage licenses.

## DISTRICT ATTORNEY

By State law the District Attorney is the public prosecutor. As such, the San Diego District Attorney prosecutes all felonies within the County and all misdemeanors outside the City of San Diego. The D.A. also has the authority to initiate criminal investigations, particularly in matters involving organized crime, white collar crime and the criminal misconduct of public officials.

The D.A. has two principal policy making powers. First, he determines what charges should be filed and in what manner criminal cases should be settled. Second, the D.A., as legislative advocate, drafts and testifies upon specific pieces of legislation in the criminal justice area.

The D.A. is a State official responsible to the electorate of the County. Official actions of the D. A. are subject to review by the State Attorney General.

The D.A. is by law independent of the Board of Supervisors; the County Charter also exempts the office of the D.A. from supervision by the CAO. The Board can, though, determine through the budget the financial resources available to the Office of the D.A. The extent of those resources, the political tenor of the community, the particular priorities of the incumbent D.A. and input from other components of the criminal justice system all influence the pattern of action the D.A. will pursue.

At the present time the D. A.'s Office places emphasis on these programs: Major Violators Unit (or Career Criminal Program), Victim/Witness Program, narcotics prosecution, and white collar crime units which protect the public from anti-trust violations, fraud, election violations and organized crime. The D.A. prosecutes cases in Juvenile Court but also has established several programs to protect children.



The office investigates and prosecutes child stealing and child concealment cases and this year is adding a Child Abuse Protection Unit. The Office enforces court ordered child support payments and assists in determining the paternity of children born out of wedlock.

The D.A. serves as the legal advisor to the Grand Jury and chooses which cases will be brought before it.

#### RECORDER

The Recorder's duties are all mandated by State law. The department maintains official records of many kinds and indexes them so that they are readily available to the public. It administers and collects for the County and the 16 cities the real estate transfer tax, keeps evidence of land ownership, official maps, liens and encumbrances. Records of births, deaths and marriage are on file. State law also sets the fees the department charges. Fees collected more than cover the expenses of the department. The excess goes to the General Fund.

#### SHERIFF

The Sheriff is the only department head who must be elected according to the State Constitution. Until June 1978 when the passage of Prop. 6 made their election mandatory, sheriffs could be appointed, but traditionally have been elected in California. (In fact, all 58 California counties did elect their sheriffs when the proposition was put on the ballot by the Legislature in 1978.).

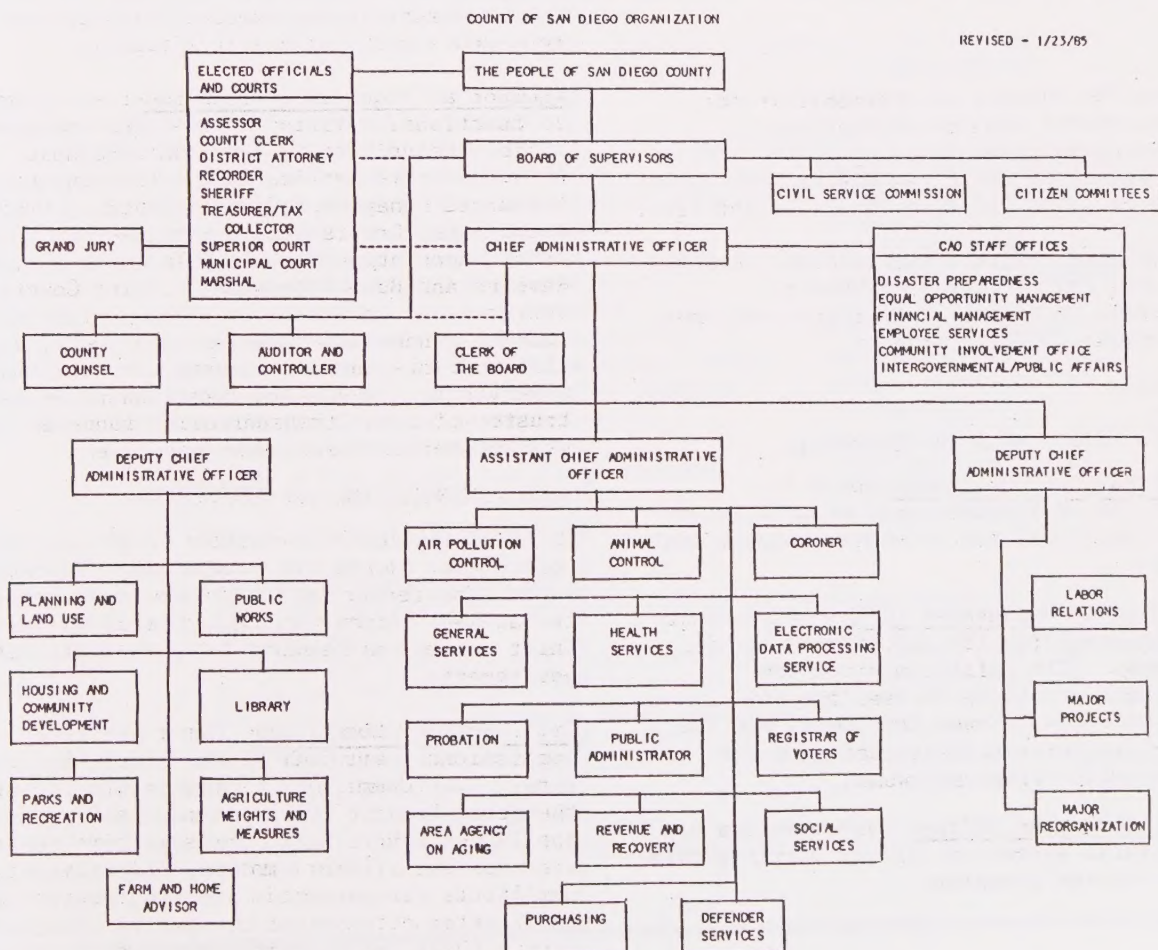
The general mission of the Sheriff's Office is prevention of crime and delinquency; protection of life and property and preservation of peace; maintenance of the County jail; provision of law enforcement services to the unincorporated area and to contracting cities; and provision of back-up service to police departments of the other cities. The Sheriff is the chief law enforcement officer in the County.

#### TAX COLLECTOR/TREASURER

One section of these offices which were combined in 1979 administers the centralized collection of secured and unsecured property taxes for the County, school districts, most special districts, and all 16 cities (about \$760,000,000); manages tax-default lands and sells at auction all property on which taxes have not been paid; and collects racehorse taxes and tourist taxes in the unincorporated area.

Another section centralizes management of banking, investment, disbursement and accountability of all County funds; invests up to \$1 billion of funds not immediately needed for expenditures, school, and special district funds. It administers the Improvement Bond Acts of 1911 and 1913 and is the paying agent for general obligation school and district bonds.

The office is responsible for the funds of the Employees' Retirement System and provides administrative services to the Board of Retirement.





## CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

The position of Chief Administrative Officer in county government corresponds to that of city manager. Both positions stem from public administration patterns that were in turn modelled on "scientific management" in large corporations. The goal is a separation of politics from administration to be effected through a board of directors which sets policy and a manager who runs the business by implementing the policies in an objective, impartial and detailed way. Such a model can be only partially achieved in a county because State laws and, in San Diego, Charter provisions tend to diversify administration.

The San Diego County Charter calls specifically for a Chief Administrative Officer, but exempts from the administrative chain the Civil Service Commission and the offices of Assessor, District Attorney, and Sheriff. The CAO supervises the expenditures of all departments and reports to the Board as to whether they are necessary. The CAO may recommend creation or abolition of positions in any department, and new positions may be created or filled only upon the recommendation of the CAO. The CAO appoints all officers except those specified otherwise by State law and the Charter.

Prop. A (Nov. 1984) added the provision that the CAO serves at the pleasure of a majority of the Board, and that the Supervisors and their staffs may not interfere with, give orders to, or instruct any officer or employee who is appointed by or under the CAO except through the CAO.

### Duties

The CAO prepares the budget, is responsible for supervision and control and the allocation of resources within established Board policies. Policy options and alternatives are presented by the CAO to the Supervisors in order for them to set priorities.

Thus the CAO analyzes budgets, legislation, economic trends, plans, and the structure of County government in order to deliver services in the most responsive and cost effective manner.

### CAO Staff Offices

Within the CAO's Office are the following:

The Office of Financial Management which is responsible for the development and preparation of the budget and the fiscal and economic analysis that must underlie it.

The Equal Opportunity Management Office which is to assure equal opportunities for all persons in all County operations. This office monitors the County's employment practices to see that the Consent Decree executed between the County and the U. S. Dept. of Justice results in achieving the hiring goals for minorities and women.

The Community Involvement Office which develops and manages a countywide system of citizen participation in County policies and programs.

The Office of Intergovernmental and Public Affairs which is responsible for legislative analysis and coordination at the federal, state and local level; e.g., the County's participation in the San Diego Association of Governments.

Disaster Preparedness Office which is the staff for both the Unified Emergency Services Organization and the CAO. It prepares contingency plans for a variety of man-made and natural hazards for the County, and assists the 16 cities in hazard identification and contingency planning.

Also within the CAO's Office are the following Special Projects, some on-going, others ad hoc: 1) the Office of Special Projects (Sales and Lease Revenue Group, including CAC parking lot development, disposal of Vauclain Point, Edgemore development, and use of Front/B Street property; Water Independence Project); Labor Relations Office; Telephone System Project; Tijuana Sewage, International Trade Commission, Cable TV Review Commission, redevelopment negotiations and economic development; 2) Office of Resource Recovery (SANDER); 3) Charter Review Panel staff support; and 4) Criminal Justice Unit.

## OTHERS

### CENTRAL MANAGEMENT OFFICES

County Counsel provides civil legal services to the Board of Supervisors, County officers and employees, County departments, boards, commissions, the courts, school districts and special districts; and represents such clients in litigation.

Auditor and Controller Department - is composed of 10 functional divisions (other than management and fiscal analysis staff); Accounts Payable, Administrative Services, ARMS (Accounting and Resources Management System) Control, Probation Accounting, Grants Fiscal Services, Payroll and Travel Accounting, Property Tax Services, and Revenue and Budget Management. The County Auditor serves as the auditor for all school districts, numerous independent special districts, as well as all districts under the control of the Board of Supervisors. The Auditor and Controller serves as trustee of local transportation funds and as auditor of a number of joint powers agencies.

### BOARDS, COMMISSIONS and COMMITTEES

The Board appoints the members of 94 advisory commissions, boards and committees. Three mentioned in the Charter are the Civil Service Commission and the advisory boards on public health and welfare. Thirty others are required by state and federal governments.

Civil Service Commission. There are five Commissioners appointed by the Board for 6-year terms. The Commission is responsible for protecting the merit basis of the personnel system through its appellate authority and investigative powers in such areas as disciplinary matters, discrimination complaints, the selection process, review and modification of proposed changes in the Civil Service Rules and contract reviews.



## GOVERNMENTAL SERVICES

Those who need government services in the San Diego region - whether residents, visitors, industries, or commercial enterprises - are supplied by a complex web of agencies. (See Chart)

At the local level, municipal services are supplied by a city or a special district. Most local services are paid for by property taxes.

Those who need services in the unincorporated area and not within special districts find that the County itself provides them with some, but not all, municipal type services. Those provided are paid for from the County's General Fund.

Another group of services is provided by the County to all who live, work, visit, or do business in the region. Some of these services, like the courts, the County must provide because the State requires it. States have traditionally used counties to administer state laws and regulations at the local level. Sometimes cities contract with the County for services to the cities' constituencies.

A fourth group of services is provided at the county level by independent, state, or federal agencies and are financed by them.

### WHICH GOVERNMENT PROVIDES THE SERVICES YOU RECEIVE?

#### I. Municipal Services

##### A. Provided by a city or a special district

building inspection	noise control	street lighting
fire protection	parks & recreation	transportation
land use planning	schools	water delivery
municipal airports	sewage disposal	flood control

##### B. Provided by a city or through contract with the County

animal control	law enforcement	solid waste collection
	libraries	& disposal
housing assistance	roads	911 emergency calls
		(staffing)

##### C. Provided by County to the unincorporated areas

All the services in Section I. B., plus

cable TV regulation	land use planning	parks and recreation
		(neighborhood)

#### II. Countywide Services

##### A. Provided by the County everywhere within its boundaries

adoptions	elections	mental health services
agricultural regulation	estate administration	parks & rec. (county)
air pollution control	farm advice	probation
alcohol & drug counsel	food stamps	public guardian
child protection	general relief	recording of documents
conservatorship	Grand Jury	refugee assistance
consumer protection	health services	Registrar of Voters
coroner	home economics advice	restaurant inspection
courts	homemaker services	senior services
defender services	immunization	tax assessments
detention centers	jails	tax collection
disaster preparedness	marriage licenses	veterinary services
District Attorney		welfare
Edgemore Geriatric Hosp.	Medi-Cal	Workfare

##### B. Provided by independent agencies

(See LWV publication, "Decision Making in San Diego County")

###### 1. Subregional

Regional Employment & Training Consortium	S. D. County Water Authority
S. D. Unified Port District	transit agencies
Water Quality Control Board, San Diego District	

###### 2. Countywide

S. D. Association of Governments	S. D. Emergency Services Organization
S.D. Local Agency Formation Comm.	S. D. County Office of Education

###### 3. San Diego and Imperial Counties

Health Systems Agency	Serra Library System
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PUBLIC PROTECTION, JUSTICE ADMINISTRATION

COURTS

The State requires counties to provide Superior and Municipal Courts. The State designates the number of judges in both courts and sets their salaries. A large proportion of each Superior Court judge's salary is paid by the State; the County pays the rest and all other expenses of the courts. Judges of both courts are elected for 6-year terms. Vacancies among the Court judges are filled by the Governor.

SUPERIOR COURT (in courthouses in San Diego, Vista and El Cajon, and Juvenile Court in Linda Vista) has jurisdiction over felonies, civil cases over \$15,000, real property title and possession, dissolution of marriages, probate, conservatorship, mental health and juvenile proceedings.

4 MUNICIPAL COURTS (in San Diego, El Cajon and branch in Ramona, North County with branches in Escondido, and South Bay) have jurisdiction over misdemeanors and infractions, traffic offenses, civil cases involving less than \$15,000, and small claims cases.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY. See "Elected Officers." Prosecutes criminal cases.

SHERIFF. See "Elected Officers." Protects life and property, operates jail.

COUNTY CLERK. See "Elected Officers." Clerical service to courts.

OFFICE OF DEFENDER SERVICES. counsel for indigent defendants accused of criminal violations.

MARSHAL provides security for both courts and serves summonses and warrants.

JURY COMMISSIONER makes initial selection of jurors for trials using Registrar of Voters and Division of Motor Vehicles lists.

GRAND JURY investigates the governments of the County, the cities and special districts. It may issue criminal indictments.

CORONER investigates various types of death, performs autopsies, prepares and issues death certificates, conducts investigations.

PROBATION OFFICER provides investigative services to both courts, administers adult and juvenile detention facilities, and helps the criminal offender to become a law-abiding member of society.

EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT for welfare recipients. Refugee Orientation and Employment Program.

AID TO FAMILIES WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN.

OTHER PROGRAMS: Workfare; Food Stamps; General Relief; Medi-Cal.

HEALTH SERVICES

The County Department of Health Services enforces all appropriate state and federal laws, rules and regulations as well as the ordinances of the County and all 16 cities in the county.

Public Health Services

Maternal health; Child and adolescent health; Disease control; County veterinarian; Public health nursing; Clinics, laboratories, epidemiological investigation; Sanitary surveys; Environmental health (sewage disposal, infectious waste; regulates food handling, apartment houses, hotels; nuisance and noise; hazardous materials control program)

Alcohol Program

Residential recovery homes; Alcohol Services Center; Convicted drinking driver program.

Physical Health Services

Edgemore Geriatric Hospital; Primary care services; Emergency medical service; County patient services; Correctional Facility nursing services

Mental Health Services

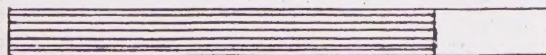
Drug abuse program; 24 hour acute care; Partial day care

SOCIAL SERVICES

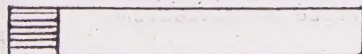
ADULT. In home supportive services for elderly and disabled; Adult Protective Services for those abused, neglected, exploited, for whose health or safety is endangered; Conservatorship referrals from Superior Court.

CHILDREN. Protective services for abused and neglected; Emergency shelter care at Hillcrest Receiving Home; Continuing child protective services - family maintenance, adoptions, licensing of families caring for unrelated children; Community Action Partnership, a bureau funded by federal Community Development Block Grants, has special emphasis on needs of youth, 10-17, residential care for ex-offenders, services to victims of domestic violence and child abuse.

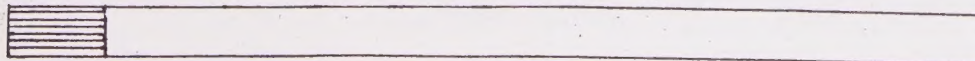
Total costs and costs to the County of mandated programs, FY 86 adopted budget



Fiscal and Public Protection: Total cost, \$188,100,000; Cost to the County, \$141,900,000



Health Services: Total cost, \$123,800,000; Cost to the County, \$10,200,000



Social Services: Total cost, \$340,700,000; Cost to the County, \$28,400,000



# changes in county government ?

Leaguers may wish to consider changes in the present San Diego County government. Following are some changes that have been studied in the past by the League and by various committees and commissions.

## APPOINTMENT or ELECTION OF DEPARTMENT HEADS?

General law counties are required to elect "the treasurer, county clerk, auditor, sheriff, tax collector, district attorney, assessor, public administrator, and coroner." Some offices may be combined. Charter counties must elect, besides their governing bodies, only the sheriff. The San Diego County Charter calls for the election of the Assessor, County Clerk, District Attorney, Recorder, Sheriff, and Tax Collector/Treasurer. Each of these six is nominated and elected according to California general law. General law also provides the methods for recalling an incumbent and for filling a vacancy in office. (n.b. The consideration of a possible change in selection for the Sheriff's office would be a State issue. The League of Women Voters of San Diego County could only recommend, if it so desired, to the Board of Directors of the LWV of California and to a state League convention that a change be studied.)

## SUGGESTED CRITERIA FOR JUDGING SELECTION METHODS

Leaguers can use these criteria or add others.

- A department head should be elected if the officer has a BASIC policy making function,
- If the office requires special public confidence or responsiveness,
- if the officer must be independent of political pressure,
- if the office is traditionally accepted as elective.

The arguments for appointment are:

- When the office requires no more than technical or professional expertise, a manager (like the CAO) or a small group (like the Board of Supervisors) can use recruiting and screening methods to find the best qualified person for the job; whereas voters must choose from those who run for office and have no way to judge qualifications from campaign statements or to weigh one candidate against another.
- An appointed department head, being in the unclassified service, can be replaced if and when the need occurs; there is no need for a recall election, nor waiting to the end of the term to replace the official.
- A shorter ballot is more desirable.
- The cost of election would be saved.
- Elected department heads could be said to be the equals of the Supervisors: indeed, they are elected by all the County voters, whereas each Supervisor is responsible to one fifth of the electorate.
- Appointed department heads are subject to administrative supervision, control and coordination with other departments. (n. b. If the County Clerk is appointed, there are alternatives to appointment by the CAO or the Board of Supervisors:

Appointment by the judges of both courts,  
Nomination by either judges or by the Presiding Judge and appointment by the CAO or the Board.)

The arguments for election are:

- The people have a right to elect their officials,
- Political independence is important,
- Election assures direct accountability to the voters,
- An official feels more direct pressure to do a good job if responsible to all citizens.
- The Auditor should be elected because of the need for independence in the work of the office and the scope of the work which covers more agencies than the County.

## SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICTS - MORE DISTRICTS, MORE SUPERVISORS?

Those in favor of a Board of more than five members say that the work load for each Supervisor would be better distributed. There would be broader representation of the electorate in policy development and greater access by citizens to the Supervisor if the number of Supervisors were increased. The Board could more easily be divided into permanent committees to look deeply into issues before presentation to the full Board. (The Board could form permanent committees now if desired.) A larger Board would certainly cost more. Now each Board office costs the County more than \$330,000 a year, with a total cost for FY 86 expected to be \$1,895,994.

Number of Supervisors	Number of Constituents	Possible cost to the County
7	286,000	\$2,500,000
9	222,000	\$3,220,000
11	182,000	\$3,630,000
15	133,000	\$4,200,000

The rough estimates include 10 staff members for each Supervisor. The staff studies items on the Board agenda and briefs the Supervisor, drafts legislation and ordinances for the Supervisor to propose, formulates and prepares policy positions, drafts speeches for the Supervisor, makes contact with local governments, meets with constituents, and schedules the Supervisor's time.

## HOW SHOULD SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICTS BE DRAWN?

The Charter says that the area of at least two districts must be substantially outside the City of San Diego.

The Board is required by the State Constitution to reapportion districts after each decennial census. Equality of population is a federal requirement. A case for equality of voters was decided in favor of population equality.

Other criteria might be contiguous and compact territory; community of interests such as culture, ethnicity, economy - or the opposite, a mixture of these elements; within communication and transportation networks, along geographic and topographic features. Should districts be composed of whole census tracts? Should cities be split? Should all the unincorporated area be in one or more districts? How about drawing boundaries radially from the coast?

Party affiliations have lately been creeping into local elections that are nonpartisan historically and constitutionally.



# governing a metropolitan area

## History

When the League of Women Voters of San Diego County studied local government at the county/regional level in 1972-74, members were influenced by the then current government reform ideas. Such ideas as state planning, metropolitan government, and multi-purpose policy making were being expressed by California Tomorrow.

What was unique about that organization was, as John Hart has written, "the linkage of concern for the environment with the other side of its case, the stubborn conviction that the workings of government do matter." Hart added, "The League of Women Voters has been a tenacious supporter of such ideas."\*

The idea that the diversity and separation of decision making was causing the destruction of the California environment was strong enough to get the Coastal Act initiative passed in 1972. It was followed by other governmentally mandated environmental and planning gains during the 1970s.

At the same time there was developing within California a strong anti-government sentiment. The overwhelming vote for Prop. 13 in June 1978 probably stemmed as much from the public's desire to cut the size of local government as it did from the hope of cutting property taxes. The electorate went on in Nov. 1979 to pass Prop. 4 which put a lid on spending by all governments in the State.

The anti-government constituency is still with us. One of their goals, economy in government, is something the League of Women Voters supports at all levels.

And the diversity of authority is still with us. To quote Hart again, "It takes a broadly informed citizen to know where the important decisions are being made and a tireless citizen to have any hope of influencing them. Often the power is so diffused that the voter is disenfranchised."

## Regional Issues

Has anything been done in the past decade to pull decision making together?

First, what are the regional services and/or problems that transcend municipal boundaries and seem to call for regional planning and implementation? The areas most talked about are: water supply and delivery, sewage treatment and disposal, solid and toxic waste disposal, air and water quality, flood control, transportation including roads and airport siting, crime, beach erosion, disease control, fire protection, agricultural land preservation, and economic development and industrial siting.

All these effect land use and land use plans effect each one. Yet land use is the most jealously guarded of city powers, and is a basic reason for the incorporation of cities. Now that population growth is impinging on neighborhoods in San Diego City and County, each neighborhood wants to have its say in land use matters.

## REGIONAL ORGANIZATION

Two scholars have looked at metropolitan reorganization recently, using categories in a continuum.\* They form a useful list for reviewing what has occurred in San Diego and has been tried in other areas. With some examples, they are:

**COOPERATION.** The San Diego region has a long history of cooperation at several government levels. There are the required and voluntary meetings of officials, such as the City Selection Committee (of mayors) and LAFCO's Special District Committee, both required by State law; and the City-County Managers Association.

**SANDAG** has had several ad hoc committees composed of elected officials: one attempted to obtain for local cities energy from the Hoover Dam reallocation of power, one is doing a beach erosion study, another is looking into the Mid-Coast Light Rail Alignment Study. The library systems of San Diego City and County have voluntarily integrated their systems.

**PRIVATIZATION.** The San Diego region has private industry and one private utility company supplying all its energy needs, 90% of it imported. It is possibly the reason that energy is not thought of as an intra-regional issue.

**INTERLOCAL AGREEMENTS.** Between the City and County of San Diego there are numerous Joint Powers Agreements (JPA): such as, the City-County Planetarium Authority, the Stadium Authority, and the Regional Employment and Training Consortium. All 16 cities and the County have joined in another JPA, the Emergency Services Organization.

**CONTRACTUAL SERVICES.** Several cities contract with the county for services. (See chart, p. 7) Some cities contract with the City of San Diego for sewage treatment in the Metro System.

**FUNCTIONAL TRANSFERS.** Nine cities, at the time of incorporation, transferred the library portion of their property taxes to the County's Library District in order to continue library services.

**VOLUNTARY REGIONAL COUNCILS OF GOVERNMENTS.** San Diego has had a COG since 1966 when it was the Comprehensive Planning Organization. It is now the San Diego Association of Governments.

\*John Hart, ed. The New Book of California Tomorrow; Reflections and Projections from the Golden State. (Los Altos, William Kaufmann, Inc., 1984) p. 405

\*Glen Sparrow and Lauren McKinsey, "Metropolitan Reorganization: A Theory and Agenda for Research," National Civic Review, v. 72, No. 9 (Oct. 1983): 489-96



**BOUNDARY COMMISSIONS.** Each county in California has had a Local Agency Formation Commission since 1964 when the Knox-Nisbet Act established them. San Diego's LAFCO has representation from special districts as well as the required representation from county, cities, and public. Its statutory purpose is to prevent urban sprawl and it has the power to act in determining spheres of influence and to approve annexations and incorporations of cities and special districts.

**METROPOLITAN SPECIAL DISTRICTS.** These are usually created by State law. In San Diego we now have the County Water Authority, the Unified Port District, the Metropolitan Transit System, and the North County Transit Development District. A San Diego Regional Planning and Transportation Agency, with wide jurisdiction, was proposed in 1978 by (then) Assemblyman Lawrence Kapiloff in AB 3698. The bill was withdrawn due to local opposition.

**REORGANIZATION OF SPECIAL DISTRICTS.** This step has been successful elsewhere in consolidating school and fire districts. A proposal to consolidate fire districts is being considered at the time of this writing.

**METRO-FEDERALISM.** This could refer to the proposal made by (then) Senator James Mills in SB 1746 in 1978. (The Board of Supervisors approved the bill but the CPO Board unanimously rejected it and the bill was withdrawn.) In this, and in alternatives proposed by a County-appointed task force (of two supervisors and the CAO) there would be a Regional Council composed of the cities with representation like that of SANDAG - one city, one vote, but weighted voting when called for. The Board of Supervisors would be the Regional Board. In one alternative the Regional Council would function as a legislature for planning and the Regional Board would be the executive branch, able to enact, veto, or amend plans sent to it by the Council. The Council could override the Board by a 2/3 vote. An alternative had the Regional Council advisory to the Regional Board. Together they would assume all the responsibilities of CPO (then, now SANDAG). A third alternative would build on the latter one by having an independent nonprofit planning corporation do multi-purpose planning for the Regional Board and Council, and for cities, and special and independent districts - all on a contract basis and when needed. In one alternative the Regional Council would assume the planning for the unincorporated area by having all city spheres extended to cover the county.

**CITY-COUNTY CONSOLIDATION.** This would call for a merger of all governments in the region into one government. Nashville-Davidson County and Miami-Dade County are examples of this radical step. The present Charter Review Panel has considered it for San Diego and has rejected it.

SANDAG has been accepted by local citizens since 1966, whereas other proposals have been turned down or withdrawn when opposition became strong.

## SAN DIEGO ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS

**History.** SANDAG has evolved from a Council of Governments formed in 1966 as the Comprehensive Planning Organization (CPO) and staffed by the County Planning Department. It became an independent agency when, in September 1972, the 13 cities in the region signed a JPA. The name was changed in 1980 to San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) because it better "described the purpose of the agency, in that it is a voluntary one among general purpose governments."

**Membership.** The County of San Diego joined in 1973, withdrew in 1980, then rejoined in January 1985. The City of Escondido withdrew its membership in 1978, and rejoined in 1982. As new cities were incorporated, they joined the organization, so that now the County and all 16 cities are members. The cities are Carlsbad, Chula Vista, Coronado, Del Mar, El Cajon, Escondido, Imperial Beach, La Mesa, Lemon Grove, National City, Oceanside, Poway, San Diego, San Marcos, Santee and Vista.

**Governing Board.** SANDAG's Board of Directors is composed of one elected official appointed by each member government. Each year the Board elects its Chair and Vice Chair. CALTRANS and the Navy (representing the U. S. Dept. of Defense) have been active advisers and liaison with the Board. SANDAG is assisted by three types of advisory committees: policy committees consisting of elected officials, technical committees made up of staffs from many agencies and technical experts, and citizen committees many of whose members are also experts in their fields.

### Regional Comprehensive Plan

**Regional Comprehensive Planning** has been the purpose and principal work of the agency. Its existence was triggered at first by the need for an Areawide Clearinghouse for federal and state grants. It still carries out that function. The Board has been designated the Airport Land Use Commission and the Regional Transportation Agency.

Planning commenced with a set of goals drawn up by many citizen committees and approved by the Board in 1974. The ten elements of the Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) were developed and all have been reviewed and updated since. They are, with their dates of adoption and update: Goals and Objectives, 1974, 1978; Open Space, 1974, 1980; Initial Coastal Plan, 1974, superseded by California Coastal Plan; Housing, 1974, 1981; Transportation, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1980, 1984; Areawide Water Quality Management, 1978, 1980; Air Quality Strategy, 1976, 1978, 1982; Energy, 1978, 1982; Development Policies, 1974, 1981; Growth Forecasts, 1985.

**SourcePoint.** SANDAG assists member agencies with census and other statistical data and its sophisticated modelling systems. In 1980 it created SourcePoint, a nonprofit corporation, to provide statistical and demographic data and technical assistance to public and private organizations on a cost-recovery basis.





## consensus questions

1. What is the optimum number of supervisors/supervisory districts for San Diego?

2. What should be the criteria for drawing supervisory districts?

3. Which of the following should be elected?

Assessor	Auditor
County Clerk	Controller
District Attorney	License Collector
Recorder	Public Administrator
Sheriff	Coroner
Tax Collector	County Veterinarian
Treasurer	Surveyor

County Mayor  
County Executive  
Registrar of  
Voters

Fish and Game Warden  
County Librarian  
Director of Finance  
Road Commissioner

4. What criteria should be used to judge county and regional government?

5. What goals should this League support for improving the planning and delivery of services that require regional resources and implementation?

## glossary

**CHARTER COUNTY.** The government of a county by a charter is generally called "home rule" but a county must yield to State law whenever the Legislature deems an issue to be of statewide concern, even if the issue is one only of county concern. Charter counties do not have as much independence as charter cities which are corporations and not subdivisions of the State as are counties.

FTE= full time equivalent

**GENERAL LAW.** The Constitution, statutes, and codes of the State.

**GENERAL LAW COUNTY.** A county governed by the general laws of the State.

**GENERAL PURPOSE GOVERNMENT.** Term used for cities and counties which perform a variety of functions and provide a variety of public services.

**JOINT POWERS AGREEMENT.(JPA)** Under the Joint Exercise of Powers Act, two or more governments (city, county, special district) which have a power in common may contract to exercise that power jointly. They usually have boards of their own.

**NET COST.** The cost to the County after specific subsidies, charges, and fees are subtracted.

**PROP. 4.** An appropriations limitation initiative approved by State voters Nov.1979, Constitutional Amendment XIII B. Limits the rate of increase in local and State government budgets from the base of 1978/79 to the rate of increase in the U.S. Consumer Price Index, plus the rate of increase in population.

**PROP. 13.** A tax limitation initiative approved by State voters June 1978, Constitutional Amendment XIII A. It set a limit of 1% on property taxes,

exclusive of former voter-approved bonded indebtedness. Assessment on real property was to be figured from a 1975 base and increase no more than 2% annually unless there was new appraisal due to change in ownership or new construction. It put a requirement of a 2/3 vote of approval by the electorate for local agencies to impose "special taxes."

**REGIONAL SPECIAL PURPOSE AGENCIES.** These can include several counties or parts of counties; e.g. the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. Except for MWD, all others of concern to San Diegans are within the San Diego region. They are most often established by the Legislature to solve a problem (the San Diego County Water Authority, the Unified Port District). They are each governed in a different manner by boards composed of appointees of their member agencies. They are usually effective, concentrating on one problem or a group of allied problems. Often they have the power to tax property and/or charge fees or rentals. No local government can compel them to plan in accordance with general purpose government goals or plans. There is seldom much citizen input. The funds they raise do not have to be shared with their member agencies or any general purpose government.

**SANDER.** San Diego Energy Recovery Authority, a JPA between the City and County of San Diego, plus other governments and private industry (Signal Environmental Systems).

**SUBVENTIONS.** Funds which one level of government provides to another for support of programs. SY = staff year, the number of staff, in full time equivalents, employed for a year.